

## ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE GREEKS.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

## PART I.

IN an age which professes to be so enlightened as the present, it may seem wonderful that there should be a profound ignorance of the theology and mythology of the Greeks; though an intimate acquaintance with them is of the highest importance to the philosopher and divine, and right conceptions about them, in general, are indispensably necessary to every one who wishes to make a solid proficiency in classic lore. But the wonder ceases when we consider that the genuine key to the religion of Greece is the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, which, since the destruction of the schools of the philosophers by the Emperor Justinian, has been only partially studied, and imperfectly understood.<sup>1</sup> For this theology was first mystically and symbolically promulgated by Orpheus, was afterwards disseminated enigmatically, through images, by Pythagoras, and was in the last place, scientifically unfolded by Plato and his genuine disciples. The peculiarity of it also is this, that it is no less scientific than sublime; and that by a geometrical series of reasoning, originating from the most self-evident truths, it develops all the deified progressions from the ineffable principle of things, and accurately exhibits to our view all the links of that golden chain, of which deity is one extreme, and body the other.

In order therefore, summarily to unfold this theology, and likewise the mythology which depends on it, I have collected, for insertion in the valuable pages of the *Classical Journal*, from my numerous publications, such elucidations on these subjects, as have been the result of the study, for nearly forty years, of the religion and philosophy of Greece.

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<sup>1</sup> For a demonstration of this, see my translations of Proclus on the Theology, and also on the *Timæus*, of Plato.

In the first place, that which is most admirable in this theology is, that it produces in the mind properly prepared for its reception the most venerable, and exalted conceptions of the great cause of all. For it celebrates this immense principle as something superior even to being itself; us exempt from the whole of things, of which it is nevertheless ineffably the source, and does not therefore think fit to enumerate it with any triad,<sup>1</sup> or order of beings. Indeed, it even apologises for attempting to give an appropriate name to this principle, which is in reality ineffable, and ascribes the attempt to the imbecility of human nature, which striving intently to behold it, gives the appellation of the most simple of its conceptions to that which is beyond all knowledge and all conception. Hence it denominates it *the one* and *the good*; by the former of these names indicating its transcendent simplicity, and by the latter its subsistence as the object of desire to all beings. For all things desire good. At the same time, however, it asserts that these appellations are in reality nothing more than the parturitions of the soul, which, standing as it were in the vestibules of the adytum of deity, announce nothing pertaining to the ineffable, but only indicate her spontaneous tendencies towards it, and belong rather to the immediate offspring of the first God, than to the first itself.

Hence, as the result of this most venerable conception of the supreme, when it ventures not only to denominate the ineffable, but also to assert something of its relation to other things, it considers this as pre-eminently its peculiarity, that it is the principle of principles; it being necessary that the charac-

<sup>1</sup> According to this theology, as I have elsewhere shown, in every order of things a triad is the immediate progeny of a monad. Hence the intelligible triad proceeds immediately from the ineffable principle of things. Phanes, or intelligible intellect, who is the last of the intelligible order, is the monad, leader and producing cause of a triad, which is denominated *γονος και νοσος*, i. e. *intelligible and at the same time intellectual*. In like manner the extremity of this order produces immediately from itself the intellectual triad, Saturn, Rhea, and Jupiter. Again, Jupiter, who is also the demiurgus, is the monad of the supermundane triad. Apollo, who subsists at the extremity of the supermundane order, produces a triad of *liberated Gods*. (*θεοι απελευθεροι*.) And the extremity of the liberated order becomes the monad of a triad of *mundane Gods*.<sup>\*</sup> This theory too, which is the progeny of the most consummate science, is in perfect conformity with the theory of the Chaldeans. And hence it is said in one of their oracles, "*In every world a triad shines forth of which a monad is the ruling principle.*" (*παντι γωρ εν κοσμω λαμπρει τριας ης μονας αρχει.*)

<sup>\*</sup> See my translation of Proclus On the Theology of Plato.

teristic property of principle, after the same manner as other things, should not begin from multitude, but should be collected into one monad as a summit, and which is the principle of all principles. Conformably to this Proclus, in the second book of his treatise on the theology of Plato says, with matchless magnificence of diction: "Let us as it were celebrate the first God, not as establishing the earth and the heavens, nor as giving subsistence to souls, and the generation of all animals; for he produced these indeed, but among the last of things; but prior to these, let us celebrate him as unfolding into light the whole intelligible and intellectual genus of Gods, together with all the supermundane and mundane divinities—as the God of all Gods, the unity of all unities, and beyond the first *adyta*,<sup>1</sup>—as more ineffable than all silence, and more unknown than all essence.—as holy among the holies, and concealed in the intelligible Gods."<sup>2</sup>

The scientific reasoning from which this dogma is deduced is the following: As the principle of all things is *the one*, it is necessary that the progression of beings should be continued, and that no vacuum should intervene either in incorporeal or corporeal natures. It is also necessary that every thing which has a natural progression should proceed through similitude. In consequence of this, it is likewise necessary that every producing principle should generate a number of the same order with itself, viz. *nature*, a natural number; *soul*, one that is psychical (i. e. belonging to soul); and *intéllect*, an intellectual number. For if whatever possesses a power of generating, generates similars prior to dissimilars, every cause must deliver its own form and characteristic peculiarity to its progeny; and before it generates that which gives subsistence to progressions far distant and separate from its nature, it must constitute things proximate to itself according to essence, and conjoined with it through similitude. It is therefore necessary from these premises, since there is one unity the principle of the universe, that this unity should produce from itself, prior to every thing else, a multitude of natures characterized by unity, and a number the

<sup>1</sup> i. e. The highest order of intelligibles.

<sup>2</sup> Και οιοι υμνησωμεν αυτοι ουχ οτι γητ, και ουρανον υπεστησεν λεγοντις, ουδ' αυ οτι ψυχας, και ζωνας απαντων γινεσκεις. και ταυτα μιν γαρ, αλλ' επ' εσχατοις. προ δε τούτων, ως παρ μιν το νοητον των θιων γινος, παν δε το νοιον εξιρηνε, παντας δε τους υπερ τοι κοσμον, και τους εν τω κοσμω θιους απαντας, και ως θιος οτι θιω απαντων, και ως ινας σταδων, και ως των αδυνάτων (lege αδυντων) επαινεω των πρωτων, και ως πασης σιγης αρεητερον, και ως πασης υπάρξεως αγνωστοτερον, αγιος η αγιος, τοις νοητοις ισοποκινημεινους θιους. Lib. II. p. 139.

most of all things allied to its cause ; and these natures are no other than the Gods.

According to this theology therefore, from the immense principle of principles, in which all things causally subsist, absorbed in superessential light, and involved in unfathomable depths, a beauteous progeny of principles proceed, all largely partaking of the ineffable, all stamped with the occult characters of deity, all possessing an overflowing fulness of good. From these dazzling summits, these ineffable blossoms, these divine propagations, being, life, intellect, soul, nature, and body, depend ; *monads* suspended from *unities*, deified natures proceeding from deities. Each of these monads too, is the leader of a series which extends from itself to the last of things, and which while it proceeds from, at the same time abides in, and returns to its leader. And all these principles and all their progeny are finally centered and rooted by their summits in the first great all-comprehending one. Thus all beings proceed from, and are comprehended in the first being ; all intellects emanate from one first intellect ; all souls from one first soul ; all natures blossom from one first nature ; and all bodies proceed from the vital and luminous body of the world. And lastly, all these great monads are comprehended in the first one, from which both they and all their depending series are unfolded into light. Hence this first one is truly the unity of unities, the monad of monads, the principle of principles, the God of Gods, one and all things, and yet one prior to all.

No objections of any weight, no arguments but such as are sophistical, can be urged against this most sublime theory, which is so congenial to the unperverted conceptions of the human mind, that it can only be treated with ridicule and contempt in degraded, barren, and barbarous ages. Ignorance and impious fraud however, have hitherto conspired to defame those inestimable works,<sup>1</sup> in which this and many other grand and important dogmas can alone be found ; and the theology of the Greeks has been attacked with all the insane fury of ecclesiastical zeal, and all the imbecil flashes of mistaken wit, by men whose conceptions on the subject, like those of a man between sleeping and waking, have been *turbid and wild, phantastic and confused, preposterous and vain*.

Indeed, that after the great incomprehensible cause of all, a

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<sup>1</sup> Viz. The philosophical works of Proclus, together with those of Plotinus, Porphyry, Iamblichus, Syrianus, Ammonius, Damascius, Olympiodorus, and Simplicius.

divine multitude subsists, co-operating with this cause in the production and government of the universe, has always been and is still admitted by all nations, and all religions, however much they may differ in their opinions respecting the nature of the subordinate deities, and the veneration which is to be paid to them by man; and however barbarous the conceptions of some nations on this subject may be when compared with those of others. Hence, says the elegant Maximus Tyrius, "You will see one according law and assertion in all the earth, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and many Gods, sons of God, ruling together with him. This the Greek says, and the Barbarian says, the inhabitant of the Continent, and he who dwells near the sea, the wise and the unwise. And if you proceed as far as to the utmost shores of the ocean, there also there are Gods, rising very near to some, and setting very near to others."<sup>1</sup>

The deification however of dead men, and the worshipping men as Gods formed no part of this theology when it is considered according to its genuine purity. Numerous instances of the truth of this might be adduced, but I shall mention for this purpose, as unexceptionable witnesses, the writings of Plato, the Golden Pythagoric verses,<sup>2</sup> and the treatise of Plutarch

<sup>1</sup> Ενα ἰδοὺς ἀν ἐν πᾶσιν γῆ ὁμοφῶντον νομον καὶ λόγον, ὅτι θεὸς ἐς πάντων βασιλεὺς καὶ πατήρ, καὶ θεοὶ πολλοὶ, θεοῦ παῖδες, συναρχόντες θίω. Ταῦτα καὶ ὁ ἄλλῃ λέγει, καὶ ὁ βαρβαρὸς λέγει, καὶ ὁ ἡπειρωτὴς καὶ ὁ θαλαττίας, καὶ ὁ σοφὸς καὶ ὁ ἀσοφός. Καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ ὠνιατοῦ ἐλθὼς τὰς ἡῶνας καὶ θεοὶ, τοῖς μὲν ἀνίσχοντες ἀγχοῦ μαλα, τοῖς δὲ καταδυσμῆτι. Dissert. i. Edit. Princ.

<sup>2</sup> "Diogenes Laertius says of Pythagoras, *That he charged his disciples not to give equal degrees of honour to the Gods and Heroes.* Herodotus (in Euterpe) says of the Greeks, *That they worshipped Hercules two ways, one as an immortal deity, and so they sacrificed to him: and another as a Hero, and so they celebrated his memory.* Isocrates (Encom. Helen.) distinguishes between the honors of Heroes and Gods, when he speaks of Menelaus and Helena. But the distinction is no where more fully expressed than in the Greek inscription upon the statue of Regilla, wife to Herodes Atticus, as Salmasius thinks, which was set up in his temple at Triopium, and taken from the statue itself by Sirmondus; where it is said, *That she had neither the honour of a mortal, nor yet that which was proper to the Gods: οὐδὲ γὰρ θνητοῖς, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ θεοῖσιν ὁμοία.* It seems by the inscription of Herodes, and by the testament of Epicteta, extant in Greek in the *Collection of Inscriptions*, that it was in the power of particular families to keep festival days in honour of some of their own family, and to give *heroical honours* to them. In that noble inscription at Venice, we find three days appointed every year to be kept, and a *confraternity* established for that purpose with the laws of it. The first day to be observed in honour of the Muse, and sacrifices to be offered to them as *deities*. The second and third days in honour of the *ancestors* of the family; between which honour and that of deities, they shewed

On Isis and Osiris. All the works of Plato indeed, evince the truth of this position, but this is particularly manifest from his *Laws*. The Golden verses order, that the immortal Gods be honoured first as they are disposed by law; afterwards the illustrious Heroes, under which appellation, the author of the verses comprehends also angels and dæmons properly so called; and in the last place the terrestrial dæmons, i. e. such good men as transcend in virtue the rest of mankind. But to honour the Gods as they are disposed by law, is, as Hierocles observes, to reverence them as they are arranged by their fabricator and father; and this is to honour them as beings superior to man. Hence, to honour men, however excellent they may be, as Gods, is not to honour the Gods according to the rank in which they are placed by their Creator, for it is confounding the divine with the human nature, and is thus acting directly contrary to the Pythagoric precept. Plutarch too, in his above-mentioned treatise most forcibly and clearly shows the impiety of worshipping men as Gods, as is evident from the following extract:

"Those therefore, who think that things of this kind [i. e. fabulous stories of the Gods as if they were men] are but so many commemorations of the actions and disasters of kings and tyrants, who through transcendancy in virtue or power, inscribed the title of divinity on their renown, and afterwards fell into great calamities and misfortunes, these employ the most easy method indeed of eluding the story, and not badly transfer things of evil report, from the Gods to men; and they are assisted in so doing by the narrations themselves. For the Egyptians relate, that Hermes was as to his body, with one arm longer than the other; that Typhon was in his complexion red; but Orus white, and Osiris black, as if they had been by nature men. Farther

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the difference by the distance of time between them, and the preference given to the other. But wherein soever the difference lay, that there was a distinction acknowledged among them appears by this passage of Valerius in his excellent oration extant in Dionysius Halicarnass. Antiq. Rom. lib. xi. p. 696. *I call, says he, the Gods to witness, whose temples and altars our family has worshipped with common sacrifices; and next after them, I call the Genii of our ancestors, to whom we give  $\delta\upsilon\tau\epsilon\rho\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\iota\mu\alpha\varsigma$ , the second honours next to the Gods, as Celsus calls those  $\tau\alpha\varsigma\ \pi\rho\omicron\sigma\eta\mu\epsilon\nu\alpha\varsigma\ \tau\iota\mu\alpha\varsigma$ , the due honours that belong to the lower dæmons.* From which we take notice, that the Heathens did not confound all degrees of divine worship, giving to the lowest object the same which they supposed to be due to the celestial deities, or the supreme God. So that if the distinction of divine worship will excuse from idolatry, the Heathens were not to blame for it." See Stillington's answer to a book intitled *Catholics no Idolaters*, p. 510, 513, &c.

still, they also call Osiris a commander, and Canopus a pilot, from whom they say the star of that name was denominated. The ship likewise, which the Greeks call Argo, being the image of the ark of Osiris, and which therefore in honour of it is become a constellation, they make to ride not far from Orion and the Dog; of which they consider the one as sacred to Orus, but the other to Isis.

“ I fear, however, that this [according to the proverb] would be to move things immoveable, and to declare war, not only, as Simonides says, against a great length of time, but also against many nations and families of mankind who are under the influence of divine inspiration through piety to these Gods; and would not in any respect fail short of transferring from heaven to earth, such great and venerable names, and of thereby shaking and dissolving that worship and belief, which has been implanted in almost all men from their very birth; would be opening great doors to the tribe of atheists, who convert divine into human concerns; and would likewise afford a large license to the impostures of Eumerus of Messina, who devised certain memoirs of an incredible and fictitious mythology,<sup>1</sup> and *thereby spread every kind of atheism through the globe, by inscribing all the received Gods, without any discrimination, by the names of generals, naval-captains, and kings, who lived in remote periods of time.* He further adds, that they are recorded in golden characters, in a certain country called Panchoa, at which neither any Barbarian or Grecian ever arrived, except Eumerus alone, who, as it seems, sailed to the Panchoans and Triphyllians, that neither have, nor ever had a being. And though the great actions of Semiramis are celebrated by the Assyrians, and those of Sesostris in Egypt; and though the Phrygians even to the present time, call all splendid and admirable actions Manic, because a certain person named Manis, who was one of their ancient kings, whom some call Masdes, was a brave and powerful man; and farther still, though Cyrus among the Persians, and Alexander among the Macedonians, proceeded in their victories, almost as far as to the boundaries of the earth, yet they only retain the name of good kings, and are remembered as such [and not as Gods].

“ But if certain persons, inflated by ostentation, as Plato says,

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<sup>1</sup> Both Arnobius, therefore, and Minucius Felix were very unfortunate in quoting this impostor to prove that the Gods of the ancients had formerly been men. Vid. Arnob. lib. iv. *Adversus Gentes*, et Minucii Felicis Octavo, p. 350. 8vo. Parisiis, 1605.

having their soul at one, and the same time inflamed with youth and ignorance, have insolently assumed the appellation of Gods, and had temples erected in their honour, yet this opinion of them flourished but for a short time, and afterwards they were charged with vanity and arrogance, in conjunction with impiety and lawless conduct; and thus,

Like smoke they flew away with swift-pac'd fate.

And being dragged from the temples and altars like fugitive slaves, they have now nothing left them but their monuments and tombs. Hence Antigonus the elder, said to one Hermodotus, who had celebrated him in his poems as the offspring of the sun and a God, "he who empties my close-stool-pan knows no such thing of me." Very properly also, did Lysippus the sculptor blame Apelles the painter, for drawing the picture of Alexander with a thunder-bolt in his hand, whereas he had represented him with a spear, the glory of which, as being true and proper, no time would take away."

In another part of the same work also, he admirably reprobates the impiety of making the Gods to be things inanimate, which was very common with Latin writers of the Augustan age, and of the ages that accompanied the decline and fall of the Roman empire. But what he says on the subject is as follows :

"In the second place, which is of still greater consequence, men should be careful, and very much afraid, lest before they are aware, they tear in pieces and dissolve divine natures, into blasts of wind, streams of water, seminations, earings of land, accidents of the earth, and mutations of the seasons, as those do who make Bacchus to be wine, and Vulcan flame. Cleanthes also somewhere says, that Perséphone or Proserpine is the spirit or air that *passes through* (*περὶ τοῦ*) the fruits of the earth, and is then *slain*, (*φονευομένη*.) And a certain poet says of reapers,

Then when the youth the limbs of Ceres cut.

For these men do not in any respect differ from those who conceive the sails, the cables, and the anchor of a ship, to be the pilot, the yarn and the web to be the weaver, and the bowl, or the mead, or the pisan, to be the physician. But they also produce dire and atheistical opinions, by giving the names of Gods to natures and things deprived of sense and soul, and that are necessarily destroyed by men, who are in want of and use them. For it is not possible to conceive that these things are Gods; since, neither can any thing be a God to men, which is deprived of soul, or is subject to human power. From these things however, we are led to conceive those beings to be Gods,



who both use them and impart them to us, and supply them perpetually and without ceasing. Nor do we conceive that the Gods who bestow these, are different in different countries, nor that some of them are peculiar to the Barbarians, but others to the Grecians, nor that some are southern, and others northern; but as the sun and moon, the heavens, the land, and the sea, are common to all men, yet are differently denominated by different nations; so the one reason that adorns these things, and the one providence that administers them, and the ministrant powers that preside over all nations, have different appellations and honors assigned them according to law by different countries. Of those also that have been consecrated to their service, some employ obscure, but others clearer symbols, not without danger thus conducting our intellectual conceptions to the apprehension of divine natures. For some, deviating from the true meaning of these symbols, have entirely slipt into superstition; and others again flying from superstition as a quagmire, have unaware fallen upon atheism as on a precipice. Hence, in order to avoid these dangers, it is especially necessary that resuming the reasoning of Philosophy as our guide to mystic knowledge, we should conceive piously of every thing that is said or done in religion; lest that, as Theodorus said, while he extended his arguments with his right hand, some of his auditors received them with their left, so we should fall into dangerous errors, by receiving what the laws have well instituted about sacrifices and festivals in a manner different from their original intention."

The Emperor Julian, as well as Plutarch, appears to have been perfectly aware of this confusion in the religion of the Heathens arising from the deification of men, and in the fragments of his treatise against the Christians, preserved by Cyril, he speaks of it as follows: "If any one wishes to consider the truth respecting you [Christians], he will find that your impiety is composed of the Judaic audacity, and the *indolence and confusion of the Heathens*. For deriving from both, not that which is most beautiful, but the worst, you have fabricated a web of evils. With the Hebrews indeed, there are accurate and venerable laws pertaining to religion, and innumerable precepts which require a most holy life and deliberate choice. But when the Jewish legislator forbids the serving all the Gods, and enjoins the worship of one alone, whose portion is Jacob, and Israel the line of his inheritance, and not only says this, but also omits to add, I think, you shall not revile the Gods, the detestable wickedness and audacity of those in after-times, wishing to take away all religious reverence from the multitude, thought

that not to worship should be followed by blaspheming the Gods. This you have alone thence derived; but there is no similitude in any thing else between you and them. Hence, from the innovation of the Hebrews, you have seized blasphemy towards the venerable Gods; *but from our religion you have cast aside reverence to every nature more excellent than man, and the love of paternal institutes.*"

"So great an apprehension indeed, says Dr. Stillingfleet,<sup>1</sup> had the Heathens of the necessity of *appropriate acts of divine worship*, that some of them have chosen to die, rather than to give them to what they did not believe to be God. We have a remarkable story to this purpose in Arrian and Curtius<sup>2</sup> concerning Callisthenes. Alexander arriving at that degree of vanity, as to desire to have divine worship given him, and the matter being started out of design among the courtiers, either by Anaxarchus, as Arrian, or Cleo the Sicilian, as Curtius says; and the way of doing it proposed, viz. by incense and prostration; Callisthenes vehemently opposed it, *as that which would confound the difference of human and divine worship, which had been preserved inviolable among them.* The worship of the Gods had been kept up in temples, with altars, and images, and sacrifices, and hymns, and prostrations, and such like; *but it is by no means fitting*, says he, *for us to confound these things, either by lifting up men to the honors of the Gods, or depressing the Gods to the honors of men.* For neither would Alexander suffer any man to usurp his royal dignity by the votes of men; how much more justly may the Gods disdain for any man to take their honors to himself. And it appears by Plutarch,<sup>3</sup> that the Greeks thought it a mean and base thing for any of them, when sent on any embassy to the kings of Persia, to prostrate themselves before them, because this was only allowed among them in divine adoration. Therefore, says he, when Pelopidas and Ismenias were sent to Artaxerxes, Pelopidas did nothing unworthy, but Ismenias let fall his ring to the ground, and stooping for that was thought to make his adoration; which was altogether as good a shift as the Jesuits advising the crucifix to be held in the Mandarin's hands while they made their adorations in the Heathen temples in China.

Conon<sup>4</sup> also refused to make his adoration, as a disgrace to

<sup>1</sup> Answer to Catholics no Idolaters; Lond., 1676. p. 211.

<sup>2</sup> Arrian. de Exped. Alex. l. 4. et Curt. lib. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Vit. Artaxerx. Ælian. Var. hist. lib. 1. c. 31.

<sup>4</sup> Justin. lib. 6.

his city; and Isocrates<sup>1</sup> accuses the Persians for doing it, because herein they showed, that they despised the Gods rather than men, by prostituting their honors to their princes. Herodotus mentions Sperchies and Bulis, who could not with the greatest violence be brought to give adoration to Xerxes, because it was against the laws of their country to give divine honor to men.<sup>2</sup> And Valerius Maximus<sup>3</sup> says, the Athenians put Timagoras to death for doing it; so strong an apprehension had possessed them, that the manner of worship which they used to their Gods, should be preserved sacred and inviolable." The philosopher Sallust also in his treatise On the Gods and the World says, "It is not unreasonable to suppose that impiety is a species of punishment, and that those who have had a knowledge of the Gods, and yet despised them, will in another life be deprived of this knowledge. And it is requisite to make the punishment of those who have honored their kings as Gods to consist in being expelled from the Gods."<sup>4</sup>

When the ineffable transcendency of the first God, which was considered as the grand principle in the Heathen theology, by its most ancient promulgators Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato, was forgotten, this oblivion was doubtless the principal cause of dead men being deified by the Pagans. Had they properly directed their attention to this transcendency they would have perceived it to be so immense as to surpass eternity, infinity, self-subsistence, and even essence itself, and that these in reality belong to those venerable natures which are as it were first unfolded into light from the unfathomable depths of that truly mystic unknown, about which all knowledge is refunded into ignorance. For as Simplicius justly observes, "It is requisite that he who ascends to the principle of things should investigate whether it is possible there can be any thing better than the supposed principle; and if something more excellent is found, the same enquiry should again be made respecting that, till we arrive at the highest conceptions, than which we have no longer any more venerable. Nor should we stop in our ascent till we find this to be the case. For there is no occasion to fear that our progression will be through an unsubstantial void, by conceiving something about the first principles which is greater and

<sup>1</sup> Panegy.

<sup>2</sup> Lib. 7.

<sup>3</sup> Lib. 6. Cap. 3.

<sup>4</sup> Και καλασινς δι ιδος ιπαι αθιαν ουκ απικος. Τους γαρ γροντας θεους, και καταφρονησαντας, ευλογον εν επιρω βιω και της γνωσιως στερισθαι, και τους αυτων βασιλειως ως θεους τιμησαντας, ιδει την δικην αυτω ποιησαι τωτ θιω ικπισιου. Cap. 18.



the Gods are performed for the sake of our advantage; and since the providence of the Gods is every where extended, a certain habitude or fitness is all that is requisite in order to receive their beneficent communications. But all habitude is produced through imitation and similitude. Hence temples imitate the heavens, but altars the earth; statues resemble life, and on this account they are similar to animals; prayers imitate that which is intellectual; but characters, superior ineffable powers; herbs and stones resemble matter; and animals which are sacrificed, the irrational life of our souls. But from all these nothing happens to the Gods beyond what they already possess; for what accession can be made to a divine nature? But a conjunction with our souls and the Gods is by these means produced.

"I think, however, it will be proper to add a few things concerning sacrifices. And in the first place, since we possess every thing from the Gods, and it is but just to offer the first fruits of gifts to the giver; hence, of our possessions we offer the first fruits through consecrated gifts; of our bodies through ornaments; and of our life through sacrifices. Besides, without sacrifices, prayers are words only; but accompanied with sacrifices they become animated words; the words indeed corroborating life, but life animating the words. - Add too, that the felicity of every thing is its proper perfection; but the proper perfection of every thing consists in a conjunction with its cause. And on this account we pray that we may be conjoined with the Gods. Since therefore life primarily subsists in the Gods, and there is also a certain human life, but the latter desires to be united to the former, a medium is required; for natures much distant from each other cannot be conjoined without a medium. And it is necessary that the medium should be similar to the connected natures. Life therefore must necessarily be the medium of life; and hence men of the present day that are happy, and all the ancients, have sacrificed animals. And this indeed not rashly, but in a manner accommodated to every God, with many other ceremonies respecting the cultivation of divinity."<sup>1</sup>

In the next place, the elegant Maximus Tyrius admirably observes concerning the worship of statues<sup>2</sup> as follows: "It appears to me that as external discourse has no need, in order to its composition, of certain Phœnician, or Ionian, or Attic, or

<sup>1</sup> See chap. 15. and 16. of my translation of this excellent work.

<sup>2</sup> See Vol. 2. of my translation of his Dissertations, Dissertat. 38. the title of which is, "Whether statues should be dedicated to the Gods?"

Assyrian, or Egyptian characters, but human imbecility devised these marks, in which inserting its dulness, it recovers from them its memory; in like manner a divine nature has no need of statues or altars; but human nature being very imbecile, and as much distant from divinity as earth from heaven, devised these symbols, in which it inserted the names and the renown of the Gods. Those, therefore, whose memory is robust, and who are able, by directly extending their soul to heaven, to meet with divinity, have, *perhaps*,<sup>1</sup> no need of statues. This race is, however, rare among men; and in a whole nation you will not find one who recollects divinity, and who is not in want of this kind of assistance, which resembles that devised by writing-masters for boys, who give them obscure marks as copies; by writing over which, their hand being guided by that of the master, they become, through memory, accustomed to the art. It appears to me therefore, that legislators devised these statues for men, as if for a certain kind of boys, as tokens of the honor which should be paid to divinity, and a certain manuduction as it were and path to reminiscence.

"Of statues, however, there is neither one law, nor one mode, nor one art, nor one matter. For the Greeks think it fit to honor the Gods from things the most beautiful in the earth, from a pure matter, the human form, and accurate art: and their opinion is not irrational who fashion statues in the human resemblance. For if the human soul is most near and most similar to divinity, it is not reasonable to suppose that divinity would invest that which is most similar to himself with a most deformed body, but rather with one which would be an easy vehicle to immortal souls, light, and adapted to motion. For this alone, of all the bodies on the earth, raises its summit on high, is magnificent, superb, and full of symmetry, neither astonishing through its magnitude, nor terrible through its

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<sup>1</sup> The philosopher Isidorus was a man of this description, as we are informed by Damascus in the extracts from his life preserved by Photius. For he says of him: ουτε τα αγαλματα προσκυνει ειδων, αλλ' ηδη επ' αυτους τους θεους ιμενος, ειση κρυπτομενους ουκ εν αδυταις, αλλ' εν αυτω τω απορητη, ο, τι ποτε εστι της παντελους αγνωσιας. πως ουν επ' αυτους απο τοιουτους ωτας; ιρωσι δεικνυ απορητην και τωτην και τις δε αλλος η αγνωστος και ο ιρως; και τινα τωτην φαιμεν, ιτασιν οι πειραθεντες επιβιν δε αδυνατον, και νοησαι γε ουδεν μαλλον ραδιον. i. e. "He was not willing to adore statues, but approached to the Gods themselves, who are inwardly concealed not in adyta, but in the occult itself, whatever it may be, of all-perfect ignorance. How therefore to them being such did he approach? Through vehement love, this also being occult. And what else, indeed, could conduct him to them, than a love which is also unknown? What my meaning is, those who have experienced this love know; but it is impossible to reveal it by words, and it is no less difficult to understand what it is."

strength, nor moved with difficulty through its weight, nor slippery through its smoothness, nor repercussive through its hardness, nor grovelling through its coldness, nor precipitate through its heat, nor inclined to swim through its laxity, nor feeding on raw flesh through its ferocity, nor on grass through its imbecility; but is harmonically composed for its proper works, and is dreadful to timid animals, but mild to such as are brave. It is also adapted to walk by nature, but winged by reason, capable of swimming by art, feeds on corn and fruits, and cultivates the earth, is of a good color, stands firm, has a pleasing countenance, and a graceful beard. In the resemblance of such a body, the Greeks think fit to honor the Gods."

He then observes, "that with respect to the Barbarians, all of them in like manner admit the subsistence of divinity, but different nations among these adopt different symbols." After which he adds, "O many and all-various statues! of which some are fashioned by art, and others are embraced through indigence: some are honored through utility, and others are venerated through the astonishment which they excite; some are considered as divine through their magnitude, and others are celebrated for their beauty! There is, not indeed any race of men, neither Barbarian nor Grecian, neither maritime nor continental, neither living a pastoral life, nor dwelling in cities, which can endure to be without some symbols of the honor of the Gods. How, therefore, shall any one discuss the question whether it is proper that statues of the Gods should be fabricated or not? For if we were to give laws to other men recently sprung from the earth, and dwelling beyond our boundaries and our air, or who were fashioned by a certain Prometheus, ignorant of life, and law, and reason, it might perhaps demand consideration, whether this race should be permitted to adore these spontaneous statues alone, which are not fashioned from ivory or gold, and which are neither oaks nor cedars, nor rivers, nor birds; but the rising sun, the splendid moon, the variegated heaven, the earth itself and the air, all fire and all water; or shall we constrain these men also to the necessity of honoring wood, or stones, or images? If, however, this is the common law of all men, let us make no innovations, let us admit the conceptions concerning the Gods, and preserve their symbols as well as their names.

"For divinity indeed, the father and fabricator of all things, is more ancient than the sun and the heavens, more excellent than time and eternity, and every flowing nature; and is a legislator without law, ineffable by voice, and invisible by the eyes. Not being able, however, to comprehend his essence, we apply

for assistance to words and names, to animals, and figures of gold, and ivory, and silver, to plants and rivers, to the summits of mountains, and to streams of water; desiring indeed to understand his nature, but through imbecility calling him by the names of such things as appear to us to be beautiful. And in thus acting, we are affected in the same manner as lovers, who are delighted with surveying the images of the objects of their love, and with recollecting the lyre, the dart, and the seat of these, the circus in which they ran, and every thing in short, which excites the memory of the beloved object. What then remains for me to investigate and determine respecting statues? only to admit the subsistence of deity. But if the art of Phidias excites the Greeks to the recollection of divinity, honor to animals the Egyptians, a river others, and fire others, I do not condemn the dissonance: let them only know, let them only love, let them only be mindful of the object they adore."

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## ON THE DIFFERENT OPINIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN FORMED OF CICERO.

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*Extracted from "The Classical Excursion from Rome to  
Arpino, by CHARLES KELSALL."*

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**T**HAT Cicero was great in the genuine acceptation of the word, none, I believe, save Dio Cassius, have ventured to question.

Considerable diversity of opinion has nevertheless always subsisted as to the degree of applause which is his due.

Most critics join in condemning his political conduct; at least that part of it which he observed with respect to the parties of Cæsar and Pompeius; some even have ventured to censure his eloquence; but those who have presumed to question his oratorical powers, are very few when compared with the arraigners of his political career.

Of his detractors, Dio Cassius stands in the first rank; but the spleen, with which he attacks the character of the orator, will fail to have weight with those who reflect that Dio flourished under Alexander Severus, an emperor who has been cited by Machiavelli as the most adroit in establishing his power by what the French call *les menées sourdes*. The degree of credit therefore which we can attach to Dio, when he handles the character of any great assertor of liberty, may be tantamount to what we should bestow on any of the hirelings of France, who wrote what they call history, during the usurpation of Napoleon: *ob metum falsi*. The



## ON THE THEOLOGY OF THE GREEKS.

BY THOMAS TAYLOR.

## PART II.

WITH respect to the worship of animals, Plutarch apologises for it in the following excellent manner in his treatise On Isis and Osiris.

“It now remains that we should speak of the utility of these animals to man, and of their symbolical meaning; some of them partaking of one of these only, but many of them of both. It is evident therefore that the Egyptians worshipped the ox, the sheep, and the ichneumon, on account of their use and benefit, as the Lemnians did larks, for discovering the eggs of caterpillars and breaking them; and the Thessalians storks, because, as their land produced abundance of serpents, the storks destroyed all of them as soon as they appeared. Hence also they enacted a law, that whoever killed a stork should be banished. But the Egyptians honored the asp, the weasel, and the beetle, in consequence of observing in them certain dark resemblances of the power of the Gods, like that of the sun in drops of water. For at present, many believe and assert that the weasel engenders by the ear, and brings forth by the mouth, being thus an image of the generation of reason [or the productive principle of things]. But the genus of beetles has no female; and all the males emit their sperm into a spherical piece of earth, which they roll about thrusting it backwards with their hind feet, while they themselves move forward; just as the sun appears to revolve in a direction contrary to that of the heavens, in consequence of moving from west to east. They also assimilated the asp to a star, as being exempt from old age, and performing its motions unassisted by organs with agility and ease. Nor was the crocodile honored by them without a probable cause; but is said to have been considered by them as a resemblance of divinity, as being the only animal that is without a tongue. For the divine reason is unindigent of voice, and proceeding through a silent path, and accompanied with<sup>1</sup> justice, conducts

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of *καὶ δικῆς*, I read *καὶ μετὰ δικῆς*.

mortal affairs according to it. They also say it is the only animal living in water that has the sight of its eyes covered with a thin and transparent film, which descends from his forehead, so that he sees without being seen, which is likewise the case with the first God. But in whatever place the female crocodile may lay her eggs, this may with certainty be concluded to be the boundary of the increase of the Nile. For not being able to lay their eggs in the water, and fearing to lay them far from it, they have such an accurate pre-sensation of futurity, that though they enjoy the benefit of the river in its access, during the time of their laying and hatching, yet they preserve their eggs dry and untouched by the water. They also lay sixty eggs; are the same number of days in hatching them, and those that are the longest lived among them, live just so many years; which number is the first of the measures employed by those who are conversant with the heavenly bodies.

"Moreover, of those animals that were honored for both reasons, we have before spoken of the dog. But the ibis, killing indeed all deadly reptiles, was the first that taught men the use of medical evacuation, in consequence of observing that she is after this manner washed and purified by herself. Those priests also, that are most attentive to the laws of sacred rites; when they consecrate water for lustration, fetch it from that place where the ibis had been drinking; for she will neither drink nor come near unwholesome or infected water; but with the distance of her feet from each other, and her bill she makes an equilateral triangle. Farther still, the variety and mixture of her black wings about the white represents the moon when she is gibbous.

"We ought not, however, to wonder if the Egyptians love such slender similitudes, since the Greeks also, both in their pictures and statues, employ many such-like resemblances of the Gods. Thus in Crete, there was a statue of Jupiter without ears. For it is fit that he who is the ruler and lord of all things, should hear no one.<sup>1</sup> Phidias also placed a dragon by the statue of Minerva, and a snail by that of Venus at Elis, to show that virgins require a guard, and that keeping at home and silence become married women. But the trident of Neptune is a symbol of the third region of the world, which the sea possesses, having an arrangement after the heavens and the air.

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<sup>1</sup> i. e. Should be perfectly impartial.

Hence also, they thus denominated Amphitrite and the Tritons. The Pythagoreans likewise adorned numbers and figures with the appellations of the Gods. For they called the equilateral triangle Minerva Coryphagenes, or begotten from the summit, and Tritogeneia, because it is divided by three perpendiculars drawn from the three angles. But they called *the one* Apollo, being persuaded to this by the obvious meaning of the word Apollo [which signifies a privation of multitude], and by the simplicity of the monad.<sup>1</sup> The duad they denominated strife and audacity; and the triad, justice. For since injuring, and being injured are two extremes subsisting according to excess and defect, justice through equality has a situation in the middle. But what is called the tetractys, being the number 36, was, as is reported, their greatest oath, and was denominated the world. For this number is formed from the composition of the four first even, and the four first odd numbers, collected into one sum.<sup>2</sup> If therefore the most approved of the philosophers did not think it proper to neglect or despise any occult signification of a divine nature when they perceived it even in things which are inanimate and incorporeal, it appears to me, that they in a still greater degree venerated those peculiarities depending on manners which they saw in such natures as had sense, and were endued with soul, with passion, and ethical habits. We must embrace therefore, not those who honor these things, but those who reverence divinity through these, as through most clear mirrors, and which are produced by nature, in a becoming manner, conceiving them to be the instruments or the art of the God by whom all things are perpetually adorned. But we ought to think that no inanimate being can be more excellent than one that is animated, nor an insensible than a sensitive being, not even though some one should collect together all the gold and emeralds in the universe. For the Divinity is not ingenerated either in colors, or figures, or smoothness; but such things as neither ever did, nor are naturally adapted to participate of life, have an allotment more ignoble than that of dead bodies. But the nature which lives and sees, and has the principle of motion from itself, and a knowledge of things appropriate and foriegu to its being, has certainly derived an efflux

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<sup>1</sup> Instead of διπλαταίς μοναδός, as in the original, which is nonsense, it is necessary to read, as in the above translation, ἀπλοτητι της μοναδός.

<sup>2</sup> For  $2+4+6+8=20$ ; and  $1+3+5+7=16$ ; and  $20+16=36$ .

and portion of that wisdom, which, as Heraclitus says, considers how both itself, and the universe is governed. Hence the Divinity is not worse represented in these animals, than in the workmanships of copper and stone, which in a similar manner suffer corruption and decay, but are naturally deprived of all sense and consciousness. This then I consider as the best defence that can be given of the adoration of animals by the Egyptians.

"With respect however to the sacred vestments, those of Isis are of various hues; for her power is about matter, which becomes and receives all things, as light and darkness, day and night, fire and water, life and death, beginning and end; but those of Osiris are without a shade and have no variety of colors, but have one only which is simple and luciform. Hence when the latter have been once used, they are laid aside and preserved; for the intelligible is invisible and intangible. But the vestments of Isis are used frequently. For sensible things being in daily use and at hand, present us with many developments and views of their different mutations: but the intellectual perception of that which is intelligible, genuine, and holy, luminously darting through the soul like a coruscation, is attended with a simultaneous contact and vision of its object. Hence Plato and Aristotle call this part of philosophy epoptic or intuitive, indicating that those who have through the exercise of the reasoning power soared beyond these doxastic, mingled, and all-various natures, raise themselves to that first, simple, and immaterial principle, and passing into contact with the pure truth which subsists about it, they consider themselves as having at length obtained the end of philosophy.<sup>1</sup> And that which the present devoted and veiled priests obscurely manifest with great reverence and caution is, that this God is the ruler and prince of the dead, and is not different from that divinity who is called by the Greeks Hades and Pluto; the truth of which assertion not being understood, disturbs the multitude, who suspect that the truly sacred and holy Osiris dwells in and under the earth, where the bodies of those are concealed who appear to have obtained an end of their being. But he indeed himself is at the remotest distance from the earth, unstained, unpolluted,

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<sup>1</sup> For τέλος εχον φιλοσοφιας, it is necessary to read, as in the translation, τέλος εχον φιλοσοφιας.

and pure from every essence that receives corruption and death. The souls of men, however, being here encompassed with bodies and passions, cannot participate of divinity except as of an obscure dream by intellectual contact through philosophy. But when they are liberated from the body, and pass into the invisible, impassive, and pure region, this God is then their leader and king, from whom they depend, insatiably beholding him, and desiring to survey that beauty which cannot be expressed or uttered by men; and which Isis, as the ancient discourse evinces, always loving, pursuing, and enjoying, fills such things in these lower regions as participate of generation with every thing beautiful and good."

And lastly, the Emperor Julian, in a fragment of an Oration or Epistle on the duties of a priest, has the following remarks on religiously venerating statues: "Statues and altars, and the preservation of unextinguished fire, and in short, all such particulars, have been established by our fathers as symbols of the presence of the Gods; *not that we should believe that these symbols are Gods, but that through these we should worship the Gods.* For since we are connected with body, it is also necessary that our worship of the Gods should be performed in a corporeal manner; but they are incorporeal. And they indeed have exhibited to us as the first of statues, that which ranks as the second genus of Gods from the first, and which circularly revolves round the whole of heaven.<sup>1</sup> Since, however, a corporeal worship cannot even be paid to these, because they are naturally unindigent, a third kind of statues was devised on the earth, by the worship of which we render the Gods propitious to us. For as those who reverence the images of kings, who are not in want of any such reverence, at the same time attract to themselves their benevolence; thus also those who venerate the statues of the Gods, who are not in want of any thing, persuade the Gods by this veneration to assist and be favorable to them. For alacrity in the performance of things in our power is a document of true sanctity; and it is very evident that he who accomplishes the former, will in a greater degree possess the latter. But he who despises things in his power, and afterwards pretends to desire impossibilities, evidently does not pur-

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<sup>1</sup> Meaning those divine bodies the celestial orbs, which in consequence of participating a divine life from the incorporeal powers from which they are suspended, may be very properly called *secondary Gods*.

sue the latter, and overlooks the former. For though Divinity is not in want of any thing, it does not follow that on this account nothing is to be offered to him. For neither is he in want of celebration through the ministry of *words*. What then? Is it therefore reasonable that he should be deprived of this? By no means. Neither therefore is he to be deprived of the honor which is paid him through *works*; which honor has been legally established, not for three, or for three thousand years, but in all preceding ages, among all nations of the earth.

Looking therefore to the resemblances of the Gods; we do not think them to be either stones or wood; for neither do we think that the Gods are these resemblances; since neither do we say that royal images are wood, or stone, or brass, nor that they are the kings themselves, but the images of kings. Whoever, therefore, loves his king, beholds with pleasure the image of his king; whoever loves his child, is delighted with his image; and whoever loves his father, surveys his image with delight.<sup>1</sup> Hence also, he who is a lover of divinity, gladly surveys the statues and images of the Gods; at the same time venerating and fearing with a holy dread the Gods who invisibly behold him.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Stillingfleet quotes this part of the extract, in his answer to a book entitled *Catholics no Idolaters*, and calls Julian the devout emperor.

<sup>2</sup> "Dio Chrysostome (says Dr. Stillingfleet in the before-cited work, p. 414) at large debates the case about images, in his Olympic Oration; wherein he first shows, that all men have a natural apprehension of one supreme God the father of all things; and that this God was represented by the statue made by Phidias of Jupiter Olympius, for so he said, *παρ' ἣν νυν ἵσμεν, before whom we now are*; and then describes him to be the king, ruler, and father of all, both Gods and men. This image he calls the most blessed, the most excellent, the most beautiful, the most beloved image of God. He says there are four ways of coming to the knowledge of God, by nature, by the instructions of the poets, by the laws, and by images; but neither poets, nor lawgivers, nor artificers were the best interpreters of the Deity, but only the philosophers who both understood and explained the divine nature most truly and perfectly. After this, he supposes Phidias to be called to account for making such an image of God, as unworthy of him; when Iphitus, Lycurgus, and the old Eleans, made none at all of him, as being out of the power of man to express his nature. To this Phidias replies, that no man can express mind and understanding by figures, or colors, and therefore they are forced to fly to that in which the soul inhabits, and from thence they attribute the seat of wisdom and reason to God, having nothing better to represent him by. And by that means joining power and art together, they endeavour, by something which may be seen and painted, to represent that which is invisible and inexpressible. But it may be said, we had better then have no image or representation of him at all. No, says he; for mankind

The Catholics have employed arguments similar to these, in defence of the reverence which they pay to the images of their saints. Indeed, it is the doctrine of the Church of England, that the Catholics form the same opinions of the saints whose images they worship as the Heathens did of their Gods; and employ the same outward rites in honoring their images, as the Heathens did in the religious veneration of their statues. Thus as the Heathens had their *tutelar Gods*, such as were Belus to the Babylonians and Assyrians, Osiris and Isis to the Egyptians, and Vulcan to the Lemnians, thus also the Catholics attribute

doth not love to worship God at a distance, but to come near and feel him, and with assurance to sacrifice to him and crown him. Like children newly weaned from their parents, who put out their hands towards them in their dreams as if they were still present; so do men, out of the sense of God's goodness and their relation to him, love to have him represented as present with them, and so to converse with him. Thence have come all the representations of God among the barbarous nations, in mountains, and trees, and stones."

The same conceptions also about statues are entertained by the Brahmans in Benares on the Ganges. For Monsieur Bernier when he was at their university, and was discoursing with one of the most learned men among them, proposed to him the question about the adoration of their idols, and reproaching him with it as a thing very unreasonable, received from him this remarkable answer: "We have indeed in our temples many different statues, as those of Brahma, Mahaden, Genick, and Gavani, who are some of the chief and most perfect Deutas (or Deities); and we have also many others of less perfection, to whom we pay great honor, prostrating ourselves before them, and presenting them flowers, rice, oyles, saffron, and the like, with much ceremony. But we do not believe these statues to be Brahma or Bechen, &c. themselves, but only their images and representations; and we only give them that honor on account of the beings they represent. They are in our temples because it is necessary, in order to pray well, to have something before our eyes that may fix the mind. And when we pray, it is not the statue we pray to, but he that is represented by it." The Brahmans have also another way of defending the worship of statues, of which the same author gives the following account: "That God, or that sovereign being whom they call Achar (immutable), has produced or drawn out of his own substance, not only souls, but also whatever is material and corporeal in the universe, so that all things in the world are but one and the same thing with God himself, as all numbers are but one and the same unity repeated." Bernier Mémoires, tome 3. p. 171. 178.

From this latter extract it appears that the Brahmans, as well as the ancient Egyptians, believe that the supreme principle is all things. According to the best of the Platonists, likewise, this principle is *all things prior to all*. For by being *the one*, it is *all things* after the most simple manner, i. e. so as to transcend all multitude.

See its Homilies, tome 2. p. 46.

the defence of certain countries to certain saints. Have not the saints also to whom the safeguard of particular cities is committed, the same office as the *Dii Præsides* of the Heathens? Such as were at Delphi, Apollo; at Athens, Minerva; at Carthage, Juno; and at Rome, Quirinus. And do not the saints to whom churches are built and altars erected correspond to the *Dii Patroni* of the Heathens? Such as were in the Capitol, Jupiter; in the temple at Paphos, Venus; in the temple of Ephesus, Diana. Are not likewise, our Lady of Walsingham, our Lady of Ipswich, our Lady of Wilsdon, and the like, imitations of Diana Agrotera, Diana Coriphea, Diana Ephesia, Venus Cypria, Venus Paphia, Venus Gnidia, and the like? The Catholics too have substituted for the marine deities Neptune, Triton, Nereus, Castor and Pollux, Venus, &c., Saint Christopher, Saint Clement, and others, and especially our Lady, as she is called by them, to whom seamen sing *Ave Maris stella*. Neither has the fire escaped their imitation of the Pagans. For instead of Vulcan and Vesta, the inspective guardians of fire according to the Heathens, the Catholics have substituted Saint Agatha, on the day of whose nativity they make letters for the purpose of extinguishing fire. Every artificer likewise and profession has a special saint in the place of a presiding God. Thus scholars have Saint Nicholas and Saint Gregory; painters Saint Luke; nor are soldiers in want of a saint corresponding to Mars, nor lovers of one who is a substitute for Venus.

All diseases too have their special saints instead of Gods, who are invoked as possessing a healing power. Thus the venereal disease has Saint Roche; the falling sickness, Saint Cornelius; the tooth-ach, Saint Apollin, &c. Beasts and cattle also have their presiding saints: for Saint Loy (says the Homily) is the horse-leach, and Saint Antony the swineherd, &c. The Homily adds, "that in many points the Papists exceed the Gentiles in idolatry, and particularly in honoring and worshipping the relics and bones of saints, which prove that they be mortal men and dead, and therefore no Gods to be worshipped, which the Gentiles could never confess of their Gods for very shame." And after enumerating many ridiculous practices of the Catholics in reference to these relics, the Homily concludes with observing, "that they are not only more wicked than the Gentile idolaters, but also no wiser than asses, horses, and mules, which have no understanding."



I shall conclude this discussion of the theology of Greece with a Synopsis of the Pagan Creed, conformably to the doctrine of Orpheus, Pythagoras, and Plato, and which consists of the following articles.

1. That there is one first cause of all things, whose nature is so immensely transcendent, that it is even super-essential ; and that in consequence of this it cannot properly either be named or spoken of, or conceived by opinion, or be known, or perceived by any being.

2. That if it be lawful to give a name to that which is truly ineffable, the appellations of *the one* and *the good* are of all others the most adapted to it ; the former of these names indicating that it is the principle of all things, and the latter that it is the ultimate object of desire to all things.

3. That this immense principle produced such things as are first and proximate to itself, most similar to itself ; just as the heat *immediately* proceeding from fire is most similar to the heat in the fire ; and the light *immediately* emanating from the sun, to that which the sun essentially contains. Hence, this principle produces many principles proximately from itself.

4. That since all things differ from each other, and are multiplied with their proper differences, each of these multitudes is suspended from its one proper principle. That, in consequence of this, all beautiful things, whether in souls or in bodies, are suspended from one fountain of beauty. That whatever possesses symmetry, and whatever is true, and all principles are in a certain respect connate with the first principle, so far as they are principles, with an appropriate subjection and analogy. That all other principles are comprehended in this first principle, not with interval and multitude, but as parts in the whole, and number in the monad. That it is not a certain principle like each of the rest ; for of these, one is the principle of beauty, another of truth, and another of something else, but it is *simply principle*. Nor is it simply the *principle of beings* but it is *the principle of principles* : it being necessary that the characteristic property of principle after the same manner as other things, should not begin from multitude, but should be collected into one monad as a summit, and which is the principle of principles.

5. That such things as are produced by the first good in consequence of being connascent with it, do not recede from essential goodness, since they are immovable and unchanged, and are eternally established in the same blessedness. All other natures, however, being produced by the one good, and many

goodnesses, since they fall off from essential goodness, and are not immovably established in the nature of divine goodness, possess on this account the good according to participation.

6. That as all things considered as subsisting *causally* in this immense principle, are transcendently more excellent than they are when considered as effects proceeding from him; this principle is very properly said to be all things, *prior* to all; *priority* denoting exempt transcendency. Just as number may be considered as subsisting occultly in the monad, and the circle in the centre; this *occult* being the same in each with *causal* subsistence.

7. That the most proper mode of venerating this great principle of principles is to extend in silence the ineffable parturitions of the soul to its ineffable co-sensation; and that if it be at all lawful to celebrate it, it is to be celebrated as a thrice unknown darkness, as the God of all Gods, and the unity of all unities, as more ineffable than all silence, and more occult than all essence, as holy among the holies, and concealed in its first progeny, the intelligible Gods.

8. That self-subsistent natures are the immediate offspring of this principle, if it be lawful thus to denominate things which ought rather to be called ineffable unfoldings into light from the ineffable.

9. That incorporeal forms or ideas resident in a divine intellect, are the paradigms or models of every thing which has a perpetual subsistence according to nature. That these ideas subsist primarily in the highest intellects, secondarily in souls, and ultimately in sensible natures; and that they subsist in each, characterised by the essential properties of the beings in which they are contained. That they possess a *paternal*, *producing*, *guardian*, *connecting*, *perfective*, and *uniting* power. That in *divine beings* they possess a power fabricative and gnostic; in *nature* a power fabricative but not gnostic: and in *human souls* in their present condition through a degradation of intellect, a power gnostic, but not fabricative.

10. That this world, depending on its divine artificer, who is himself an intelligible world, replete with the archetypal ideas of all things, is perpetually flowing, and perpetually advancing to being, and, compared with its paradigm, has no stability, or reality of being. That considered, however, as animated by a divine soul, and as being the receptacle of divinities from whom bodies are suspended, it is justly called by Plato, a blessed God.

11. That the great body of this world, which subsists in a perpetual dispersion of temporal extension, may be proper-

ly called a *whole*, with a total subsistence, or a *whole of wholes*,<sup>1</sup> on account of the perpetuity of its duration, though this is nothing more than a flowing eternity. That the other wholes which it contains are the celestial spheres, the sphere of æther, the whole of air considered as one great orb, the whole earth, and the whole sea. That these spheres are *parts with a total subsistence*, and through this subsistence are perpetual.

12. That all the parts of the universe, are unable to participate of the providence of divinity in a similar manner, but some of its parts enjoy this eternally, and others temporally; some in a primary and others in a secondary degree; for the universe being a perfect whole, must have a first, a middle, and a last part. But its first parts, as having the most excellent subsistence, must always exist according to nature; and its last parts must sometimes exist according to, and sometimes contrary to nature. Hence the celestial bodies, which are the first parts of the universe, perpetually subsist according to nature, both the whole spheres, and the multitude co-ordinate to these wholes; and the only alteration which they experience is a mutation of figure, and variation of light at different periods; but in the sublunary region, while the spheres of the elements remain on account of their subsistence, as wholes, always according to nature; the parts of the wholes have sometimes a natural, and sometimes an unnatural subsistence: for thus alone can the circle of generation unfold all the variety which it contains. The different periods therefore in which these mutations happen, are with great propriety called by Plato, periods of *fertility*<sup>2</sup> and *sterility*: for in these periods a fertility or sterility of men, animals, and plants, takes place; so that in fertile periods mankind will be both more numerous, and upon the whole superior in mental and bodily endowments to the men of a barren period. And a similar reasoning must be extended to irrational animals and plants. The most dreadful consequence, likewise, attending a barren period with respect to mankind is this, that in such a period they have no scientific theology, and deny the existence of the immediate progeny of the ineffable cause of all things.

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<sup>1</sup> As little as the eye of a fly at the bottom of the largest of the Egyptian pyramids sees of the whole of that pyramid, compared with what is seen of it by the eye of a man, so little does the greatest experimentalist see of the whole of things, compared with what Plato and Aristotle saw of it, through scientific reasoning founded on self-evident principles.

<sup>2</sup> The so much celebrated *heroic age* was the result of one of these fertile periods, in which men, transcending the herd of mankind both in practical and intellectual virtue abounded on the earth.

13. That as the divinities are eternally good and profitable, but are never noxious, and ever subsist in the same uniform mode of being, we are conjoined with them through similitude when we are virtuous, but separated from them through dissimilitude when we are vicious. That while we live according to virtue we partake of the Gods, but cause them to be our enemies when we become evil : not that they are angry (for anger is a passion, and they are impassive,) but because guilt prevents us from receiving the illuminations of the Gods, and subjects us to the power of avenging dæmons. Hence, if we obtain pardon of our guilt through prayers and sacrifices, we neither appease the Gods, nor cause any mutation to take place in them ; but by methods of this kind, and by our conversion to a divine nature, we apply a remedy to our vices, and again become partakers of the goodness of the Gods. So that it is the same thing to assert, that divinity is turned from the evil, as to say that the sun is concealed from those who are deprived of sight.

14. That a divine nature is not indigent of any thing. But the honors which are paid to the Gods are performed for the sake of the advantage of those who pay them. Hence, since the providence of the Gods is extended every where, a certain habitude or fitness is all that is requisite for the reception of their beneficent communications. But all habitude is produced through imitation and similitude. On this account temples imitate the heavens, but altars the earth. Statues resemble life, and on this account they are similar to animals. Herbs and stones resemble matter ; and animals which are sacrificed, the irrational life of our souls. From all these, however, nothing happens to the Gods beyond what they already possess ; for what accession can be made to a divine nature ? But a conjunction of our souls with the gods is by these means effected.

15. That as the world considered as one great comprehending whole is a divine animal, so likewise every whole which it contains is a world, possessing in the first place a self-perfect unity proceeding from the ineffable, by which it becomes a God ; in the second place, a divine intellect ; in the third place, a divine soul ; and in the last place a deified body. That each of these wholes is the producing cause of all the multitude which it contains, and on this account is said to be a whole prior to parts ; because considered as possessing an eternal form which holds all its parts together, and gives to the whole perpetuity of subsistence, it is not indigent of such parts to the perfection of its

being. And it follows by a geometrical necessity, that these wholes which rank thus high in the universe must be animated.

16. That of the Gods some are mundane, but others supermundane; and that the mundane are those who fabricate the world. But of the supermundane, some produce essences, others intellect, and others soul; and on this account, they are distinguished into three orders. Of the mundane Gods also, some are the causes of the existence of the world; others animate it; others again harmonise it, thus composed of different natures; and lastly, others guard and preserve it when harmonically arranged. Since these orders likewise, are four, and each consists of things first, middle, and last, it is necessary that the governors of these should be twelve. Hence Jupiter, Neptune, and Vulcan, fabricate the world; Ceres, Juno, and Diana, animate it; Mercury, Venus, and Apollo, harmonise it; and lastly, Vesta, Minerva, and Mars, preside over it with a guardian power. But the truth of this, may be seen in statues, as in enigmas. For Apollo harmonises the lyre; Pallas is invested with arms; and Venus is naked; since harmony produces beauty, and beauty is not concealed in subjects of sensible inspection. That as these Gods primarily possess the world, it is necessary to consider the other mundane Gods as subsisting in them; as Bacchus in Jupiter, Esculapius in Apollo, and the Graces in Venus. We may also behold the spheres with which they are connected, viz. Vesta with the earth, Neptune with water, Juno with air, and Vulcan with fire. But Apollo and Diana are assumed for the sun and moon; the sphere of Saturn is attributed to Ceres; Æther to Pallas; and heaven is common to them all.

17. That man is a microcosm, comprehending in himself *partially* every thing which the world contains divinely and *totally*. That hence he is endued with an intellect subjecting in energy, and a rational soul proceeding from the same causes as those from which the intellect and soul of the universe proceed. And that he has likewise an ethereal vehicle analogous to the heavens, and a terrestrial body composed from the four elements, and with which also it is co-ordinate.

18. That the rational part of man, in which his essence consists, is of a self-motive nature, and that it subsists between intellect, which is immovable both in essence and energy, and nature, which both moves and is moved.

19. That the human as well as every mundane soul, uses periods and restitutions of its proper life. For in consequence of being measured by time, it energizes transitively, and possesses a proper motion. But every thing which is moved perpetually,

and participates of time, revolves periodically, and proceeds from the same to the same.

20. That as the human soul ranks among the number of those souls that *sometimes* follow the mundane divinities, in consequence of subsisting immediately after dæmons and heroes the *perpetual* attendants of the Gods, it possesses a power of descending infinitely into the sublunary region, and of ascending from thence to æthereal being. That in consequence of this, the soul, while an inhabitant of earth, is in fallen condition, an apostate from deity, an exile from the orb of light. That she can only be restored, while on earth, to the divine likeness, and be able after death to re-ascend to the intelligible world, by the exercise of the *cathartic*, and *theoretic* virtues; the former purifying her from the defilements of a mortal nature, and the latter elevating her to the vision of true being. And that such a soul returns after death to her kindred star from which she fell, and enjoys a blessed life.

21. That the human soul essentially contains all knowledge, and that whatever knowledge she acquires in the present life, is nothing more than a recovery of what she once possessed; and which discipline evocates from its dormant retreats.

22. That the soul is punished in a future for the crimes she has committed in the present life; but that this punishment is proportioned to the crimes, and is not perpetual; divinity punishing, not from anger or revenge, but in order to purify the guilty soul, and restore her to the proper perfection of her nature.

23. That the human soul on its departure from the present life, will, if not properly purified, pass into other terrene bodies; and that if it passes into a human body, it becomes the soul of that body; but if into the body of a brute, it does not become the soul of the brute, but is externally connected with the brutal soul in the same manner as presiding dæmons are connected, in their beneficent operations, with mankind; for the rational part never becomes the soul of the irrational nature.

24. Lastly, that souls that live according to virtue, shall in other respects be happy; and when separated from the irrational nature, and purified from all body, shall be conjoined with the Gods, and govern the whole world, together with the deities by whom it was produced.